



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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National Influenza Vaccination Week Highlights the Importance of Flu Vaccination

BISMARCK, N.D. – December 8 through 14 is National Influenza Vaccination Week. The North Dakota Department of Health is reminding all North Dakotans of the importance of receiving the flu vaccine, according to Molly Sander, Immunization Program manager for the Department of Health.

“The supply of flu vaccine is plentiful this year, so we are urging everyone to get vaccinated to prevent influenza, regardless of age or health status,” Sander said. “Getting vaccinated is the easiest and most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu.”

Each year, more than 400 North Dakotans die as a result of complications from influenza and pneumonia, and hundreds more are hospitalized. So far this season, five cases of influenza have been reported in the state.

“Many people who are in good health think that they will not get the flu, or that if they do, it won’t be serious. But, in fact, the flu is serious,” said Michelle Feist, Influenza Surveillance coordinator for the Department of Health. “In North Dakota, the influenza season usually does not peak until after the New Year, so there is still sufficient time for people to be vaccinated.”

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone be vaccinated against the flu, especially the following:

- All children ages 6 months through 18 years
- All adults ages 50 and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Pregnant women

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- People of any age who have long-term health problems, such as:
 - Heart disease
 - Lung disease
 - Kidney disease
 - Diabetes
 - Asthma
 - Anemia
 - Weakened immune systems due to HIV/AIDS and cancer treatments
 - Breathing problems due to neuromuscular disorders

People who could spread the disease to those at high risk – such as health-care workers, out-of-home caregivers and household contacts – also should be vaccinated.

Typical flu symptoms include fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches and extreme fatigue.

The Department of Health is airing television and radio public service announcements during National Influenza Vaccination Week to encourage everyone to be vaccinated. The PSAs are available for viewing at www.ndflu.com/News/NewsReleases.aspx.

For information about vaccine availability, people should contact their local public health unit, health-care provider or pharmacist. For information about influenza, visit www.ndflu.com.

REMEMBER: The flu vaccine can protect not only you, but everyone around you.

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